reply came at once: Mogilev had other troubles; the whole front was crumbling. Meanwhile a call came to the Tauride Palace from the Fifth Army by direct wire. I answered it. Vilenkin was calling on behalf of the army committee: "If you need reinforcements, the Fifth Army can put a task force at your disposal." I rushed to Chkheidze's office. A few of the Committee's leaders were there. I told them about the offer of the Fifth Army. Chkheidze asked Tseretelli to discuss the matter with Vilenkin and urge the Fifth Army to send troops as promptly as possible.

At 10:00 P.M. the First Machine Gunners' regiment appeared in front of the Tauride Palace in marching formation. A non-commissioned officer, Jilin, a notorious Communist, was at the head of the column. He posted the regiment before the colonnade of the palace and sent a messenger to the Executive Committee to ask its representatives to appear before the soldiers. Chkheidze and I went to the entrance of the palace. Chkheidze had lost his voice and asked me to speak. I reminded Jilin that armed demonstrations were contrary to the orders of the Committee: "Your appearance in the streets with arms seems to indicate that your regiment refuses to recognize the authority of the All-Russian Executive Committee. If you do not recognize our authority, why are you here?"

Jilin replied that the Machine Gunners recognized our authority. Indeed, they recognized no other authority but ours. But they were disturbed by the rumors that the Executive Committee intended to enter into a new coalition with reactionary capitalists. The Machine Gunners would not stand for such a policy. They had suffered enough. The soldiers roared their approval: "All power to the Soviets!"

Jilin's profession of respect for the Executive Committee called for a conciliatory reply. I explained to him that the All-Russian Executive Committee would meet the next day to make decisions in conformity with the desires of the majority of the Russian people and concluded, "There are many hundreds of regiments like yours in Russia. We cannot give particular weight to your opinion just because you are nearer the Tauride Palace and are the first to express your views. Whatever our decision, you will have to comply with it."

The soldiers neither cheered nor jeered. Then the regiment marched past the entrance of the palace so that each battalion could salute our chairman and I could repeat what I had said to the head of the column. The soldiers marked time in silence.

Next came a grenadiers' regiment and a procession of workers with Bolshevist banners. Chkheidze and I again stood between the white columns of the palace. Chkheidze greeted each demonstration by waving his hands, and I spoke to the crowds. A group of Communists